from Iran through the Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) transnational gas pipeline. Various important issues are under discussion amongst the participating countries.

Such multilateral projects involve protracted discussions, as all the aspects have to be carefully examined and deliberated upon to the satisfaction of the participating countries to protect each country's interests as also to avoid any future problems in the successful operation of the project.

(d) Government of India has adopted a multi-pronged strategy to augment gas supplies and bridge the gap between supply and demand for the domestic market. These cover:—

(a) Intensification of domestic exploration and production activities;

(b) Exploitation of unconventional sources, like Coal Bed Methane (CBM);

(c) Underground Coal Gasification;

(d) Implementation of Natural Gas Hydrate Programme (NGHP) for evaluation of hydrate resources and their possible commercial exploitation;

(e) LNG Imports; and

(f) Gas sourcing through transnational gas pipelines.

Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan Gas Pipeline

808. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India is planning to join Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan Gas Pipeline Project;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Asian Development Bank has also agreed to India's joining the proejct;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) what is the outcome of the discussions held in this regard in Islamabad between 28th and 29th October, 2007?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (d) The Government of Turkmenistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan have proposed a transnational gas pipeline to exploit the available gas reserves in Turkmenistan. They designated ADB as the lead development partner. ADB had carried out a study and approached India for participating in the project. An Indian delegation led by Hon'ble Shri Dinsha Patel, Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas visited Ashgabat, Turkmenistan to participate in the 9th Steering Committee Meeting of the countries participating in Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (TAP) Gas Pipeline Project held on February 14-15, 2006 as an 'Observer'. The Steering Committee invited India to become an official member of the project. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas brought the matter before the Cabinet in May, 2006 after inter-Ministerial discussions. The Cabinet in the meeting held on 18th May 2006, accorded an 'in principle' approval to the proposal for India joining the TAP project.The decision of the Government of India to join Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan Gas Pipeline Project as an official member was conveyed to ADB in June, 2006. ADB circulated the revised draft Framework Agreement amongst the participating countries for their comments after the first meeting to Technical Working Group held in April, 2007 for inclusion of India as an official member of the project.

(e) Government is not aware of the discussions relating to TAP project held in Islamabad on October 28-29, 2007, However, the next meeting of the Steering Committee of the participating countries is scheduled to be held soon.

Issue of Petroleum Bonds by oil companies

809. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has given a go ahead for issuing Petroleum Bonds by oil PSUs to the tune of Rs. 12,000 crores to compensate them for selling fuel below the international prices;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that this Ministry wanting oil bond worth Rs. 24,000 crores; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. The Government has approved that 42.7% of the total under-recoveries of the Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) for the current financial year (2007-08) may be borne by the Government in the form of Oil Bonds, The Quantum of amount will depend upon the price of petoleum products and crude oil in the international market, which vary on a daily basis.

Investment plans of Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL)

810. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) plans to invest US $ 1.5 billion in Vizag petro-chemical plant;

(b) whether HPCL wants to invest an additional Rs. 10,900 crores in refinery expansion at Vizag;

(c) if so, whether HPCL will expand the present pipeline between Vizag and Vijayawada, which passes through villages like Tadipudi;

(d) the steps proposed to ensure that pipeline use and expansion is beneficial for villages in East and West Godavari district;

(e) whether HPCL has not honoured its earlier pledges to help villages on the pipeline route; and

(f) the steps proposed to avoid troubling villagers on pipeline route?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) has undertaken a preliminary feasibility study to set up a Petrochemicals Complex at Visakhapatnam in the State of Andhra Pradesh in consortium with a partner, after which, the capacity and costs can be firmed up.

(b) HPCL plans to undertake debottlenecking of units at Visakh Refinery to augment the thruput of the Refinery to 10 MMTPA by the end of the XI Plan as well as increase the refining capacity to 16 MMTPA by the end of the XII Plan.